

## 5.0 Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Consistent with DOE's GNEP siting study guidance, the stakeholder and community engagement component of this project included investigation of opinions about GNEP technologies through structured activities with thought leaders across the state. These activities were aligned with the technical siting study and included discussion on the regulatory, licensing, and permitting scope of the TRIDEC grant.

The state of Washington has a unique opportunity to shape the future of energy production and waste reduction capabilities at Hanford through the proposed GNEP Initiative, which features recycling spent nuclear fuel and waste while generating climate-friendly power. With many citizens concerned about energy security and global warming today, the Consortium found stakeholders open to provide input.

This assessment included a set of outreach activities for the purpose of informing local, state, regional, and tribal stakeholders about the siting study, and collecting their opinions, values, concerns, and questions regarding the potential to establish GNEP facilities at Hanford.

The outreach strategy featured core focal community activities with local and regional stakeholders, of which three were focus group sessions conducted in diverse locales in the state. In addition, a variety of smaller, more informal meetings and interactions were held with elected officials, business and thought leaders. In addition contact was made with Tribal nations. A media strategy was developed and implemented during the grant period.

In keeping with the mission to listen and inform rather than advocate, the effort was framed as “*A Conversation with Washington State.*” A limited collateral campaign was developed to include a poster featuring the Hanford Reach and messaging on how the state might go about “*Shaping Our Future.*” Other communications were more informal and conversational in nature.

Throughout the grant period, the Consortium and a team of Seattle-based consultants used a proactive, informative approach involving one-on-one conversations within the state and with Washington's Congressional delegation in Washington, D.C.; professionally designed and structured focus groups; and the active involvement of local leaders in eliciting honest feedback. Communities and individual participants were targeted to ensure a broad perspective and informed opinions. The Consortium purposely adopted this approach as a new paradigm for obtaining public assessment on the grant recipients and the Tri-City community.

The focus of the conversation within Washington State and with the delegation in Washington, D.C. was on the *future* of Hanford and not its *history*. This was not a study of how to sell the state on a federal program initiative or to generate or protect jobs in the Tri-Cities. Instead, it provided an opportunity to collect opinions, values, and concerns regarding future energy systems and technologies that could address the unique nuclear waste processing and storage issues in Washington State and the nation.

## 5.1 Focused Community Outreach Activities

The Consortium's focused community outreach activities were conducted at the TRIDEC Annual Meeting and through three focus group sessions held in Washington State. These sessions were conducted in Edmonds, Spokane, and Seattle.<sup>a</sup>

### 5.1.1 TRIDEC Annual Meeting

The Consortium presented information on the GNEP siting study at TRIDEC's Annual Meeting held in Kennewick, Washington, on March 16. The annual meeting is routinely attended by more than 200 community leaders and citizens from the immediate and outlying communities. This year, through concerted efforts to promote the meeting to the public, attendance surpassed 300 people. To achieve this strong attendance, TRIDEC placed two ads in the Tri-City Herald on March 11 and March 15 announcing this public meeting, highlighting the presentation on GNEP, and promoting the meeting to the public. A news article on the annual meeting was published in the paper several days in advance of the March 16 meeting; this coverage also mentioned that the TRIDEC meeting would be open to the public. Unlike in previous years, annual meeting attendees had the option to attend the breakfast meeting and pay a registration fee to cover the cost of the breakfast, or forgo the breakfast and sit in an open seating area arranged by TRIDEC for the specific purpose of encouraging all interested local citizens to attend.

The TRIDEC meeting featured an annual year-in-review presentation, a presentation on the proposed GNEP Initiative, and a presentation on the scope of the TRIDEC grant. Following the presentation, the meeting was open for questions and answers where comments and questions were captured and reported in a community engagement summary and provided to DOE per grant criteria (see Appendix). Also, a survey was distributed at the end of the meeting to gather more information on the opinions, values, and concerns regarding the objectives of GNEP. This survey and results are provided in the Appendix.

TRIDEC also sponsored a drawing competition encouraging local elementary school children to share their ideas on the future of the Tri-Cities. A copy of the winning submission is included in the Appendix.

### 5.1.2 Statewide Focus Group Meetings

Regional focus group sessions were conducted around the state in April 2007. These meetings were held in Edmonds on April 12, in Spokane on April 19, and in Seattle on April 23. Participants representing a broad spectrum of backgrounds were invited to attend these two-hour discussion group sessions. Eleven to 12 attendees per meeting were selected based on their professional, academic, and environmental leadership roles and positions of influence in their communities. Participants ranged from small business owners to senior executives at high-profile organizations, labor representatives, Public Utility District and Port officials, current and former university professors, scientific leaders, a freelance environmental journalist, and a former Washington State governor.

Participant opinions, values, and concerns of attendees were collected at each of the meetings. To foster a candid and open discussion for collecting input, no video or audio taping was conducted.

---

<sup>a</sup> The Edmonds meeting had originally been scheduled for Everett, Washington, but the venue was changed to Edmonds, which is also in Snohomish County, north of Seattle.

Participants were assured that their names would not be attributed to specific comments. A discussion guide was developed and used by a facilitator to provide attendees with background information and key points relevant to nuclear issues, GNEP components, assets at Hanford, factors unique to Washington State, present-day realities of global warming, advanced nuclear technologies, and cleanup and nuclear waste reduction priorities. A sample of this guide is provided in the Appendix.

At the start of each session, a Battelle Consortium member presented an overview of the regulatory and licensing scope of the TRIDEC grant and an overview of the elements of the proposed GNEP Initiative. Following these presentations, a facilitator guided the remainder of the discussions. At times, the Battelle representative was asked to provide clarifying information relevant to the TRIDEC grant or proposed GNEP Initiative. Points of clarification were kept to a minimum to maximize the opportunity to collect the opinions, values, and concerns of the attendees regarding the TRIDEC grant and components of GNEP. Collection of input was done through note-taking and summarization of key points on a whiteboard.

A brief synopsis of the comments and questions from the sessions were captured and reported in community engagement summaries and provided to DOE per grant criteria (see Appendix). Participants at each focus group site responded favorably to this approach and their feedback was both candid and promising for proponents of future comprehensive energy solutions.

### 5.1.3 Focus Group Common Themes

- Hanford cleanup and reduction of high-level waste is the top priority and no additional waste should be imported until Hanford is cleaned up; there is cautious interest in spent fuel recycling as a way to reduce waste and accelerate cleanup.
- While nuclear power may be part of the nation's future energy mix – especially in light of the urgent need to produce climate-friendly energy – it should be evaluated as part of a comprehensive energy plan and should “compete” with conservation, renewables, and other means for addressing energy supply needs.
- The history of nuclear power, especially in Washington State, makes a new nuclear program a hard sell; before making a commitment, participants wanted more information and assurances (through R&D, demonstration, support from trusted experts, and oversight) that GNEP technologies would be safe and cost effective, and perform as advertised.
- Participants were wary of the notion that GNEP would effectively address proliferation concerns, wanting more information and noting the uncertainties inherent in international agreements and national governments over time.
- There is a need for a comprehensive, integrated, national and state or regional energy strategy because energy supply is of concern.
- Energy demand is growing in the United States and abroad.
- Participants recognize that global warming is an urgent concern.
- Participants strongly favor renewables and conservation for meeting energy needs.
- Requests were made for more education on nuclear recycling methods.
- Some participants pointed out that the repeated efforts to restart FFTF were not compelling, and in fact heightened the “Tri-Cities versus the rest of the state” dynamic.

- Many participants recognized that nuclear needs to be considered in the national “mix” for energy resources.
- Participants were intrigued with recycling and how it can reduce the volume and toxicity of nuclear waste in the nation and wanted more specific information about the recycling process.
- Participants acknowledged the need for more R&D regarding recycling.
- Most participants were not familiar with the GNEP Initiative.
- There is skepticism that a global approach with GNEP can be achieved.
- Participants are very concerned about U.S. reliance on foreign oil supplies.
- Credible, independent experts and leaders would be needed to move recycling approaches forward in the United States.
- Participants are open to recycling if it can help accomplish clean up of Hanford nuclear material and reduce nuclear waste overall.
- Safety is a big concern.
- Participants wanted a timeline for GNEP and waste reduction activities.
- Participants believe Hanford cleanup has been a failure to date.
- Participants are concerned about the importation of nuclear waste into the state.
- There is little faith that political processes will effectively address energy issues.

#### **5.1.4 Outreach to Tribal Nations**

Recognizing the importance of tribal nations input regarding the potential to establish new operations at the Hanford Site, the Consortium made concerted efforts to engage in a dialog on the proposed GNEP Initiative and the TRIDEC siting study grant with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, Oregon. The Consortium believed these communications, in addition to the DOE-HQ interactions with the tribal nations, would provide valuable information to the tribes and an open forum in which to receive views regarding Hanford as a potential location for GNEP facilities. In addition to formal letters of invitation to meet with the tribal nations (see letters in Appendix), several phone calls were made and emails sent requesting meetings on this subject during the siting study grant period. As of the close of the study grant (April 30, 2007) the tribes had not responded to requests to meet. TRIDEC believes this could be a result of the tribes already receiving a briefing from DOE staff on GNEP on March 13, 2007. TRIDEC will continue to pursue these interactions after the conclusion of the official grant period given the importance of outreach and partnership with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, Oregon.

#### **5.1.5 One-on-One Meetings and Interactions**

Consortium members and consultants contacted more than 75 regional thought leaders and engaged them in one-on-one conversations on the goals of GNEP and the potential role the Hanford Site may have in the siting of GNEP facilities. It was made clear at the outset of each meeting that the Consortium members and consultants were investigators, not advocates for GNEP. The goals were to inform local, regional, and state stakeholders about GNEP; initiate dialogue in an effort to obtain information and

perspectives for this study; and develop core questions and messages for the focus groups. Through these discussions, the outreach team gained an overall sense of the political atmosphere surrounding these issues that could significantly impact the Tri-Cities' future. They tested language, images, and ideas, and probed representatives of the most important audiences in a give-and-take setting.

Overall, many of the findings from the one-on-one sessions mirrored those from the focus group discussions. However, additional findings listed below indicate the opportunity nuclear proponents can harness in Washington.

### **5.1.6 Feedback from One-on-One Meetings and Interactions**

- Funding for Hanford cleanup is the top priority and nothing should be done to jeopardize it.
- FFTF has become a symbol of the challenges facing Hanford and there was significant resistance by many state political leaders toward any attempt to restart FFTF as part of GNEP or any other initiative.
- If reprocessing were to become a viable part of the clean-up solution, it could only proceed without any new waste being imported to Hanford.
- If the state is to move forward with an approach that includes a conventional reactor or an ARR, then one train of thought is to retain that energy for use in the state and ensure Washington's energy needs are met first before transmitting the power elsewhere.
- Recycling becomes key in the equation for cleanup if Yucca Mountain is abandoned as a repository site, as long as Hanford only receives its fair share of the nation's waste; Hanford's waste is recycled and vitrified first; and funding for cleanup is significantly increased.
- Proliferation concerns were expressed; people need to be convinced the benefits outweigh the costs of nuclear energy.
- They were equally interested in information regarding the technical viability, timeline, and potential commercialization of the next generation of nuclear technologies.
- Questions were raised on the cost effectiveness of nuclear power versus other alternatives. To be effective, any further discussion will require addressing the earlier, never-completed commercial nuclear plants (WPPSS) which continue to burden ratepayers.

### **5.1.7 Other Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

TRIDEC met with the Executive Board of Energy Northwest on several occasions to discuss the scope of the grant and to answer questions and receive input on Hanford as a proposed site for GNEP facilities. Since land adjacent to Energy Northwest's Columbia Generating Station and current idle infrastructure at Energy Northwest is proposed for the project in the study, these interactions were felt to be highly constructive for the project. These interactions were held on January 17, March 1, and April 25.

TRIDEC received letters of support for the siting study from Congressman Doc Hastings, Senator Jerome Delvin, several state representatives, and mayors and city councils of the major cities in southeastern Washington, several county commissioners, and other groups including chambers of commerce and local and statewide unions. See the Appendix for a letter of support from 12 state legislators and representatives and a list of endorsements from regional leaders.

## 5.2 Media Relations and Outreach

The Consortium's media outreach strategy engaged key environmental, energy, technology, business, and political reporters in a conversation about the GNEP program. Key reporters and editors throughout Washington and Oregon were identified. These members of the news media have been actively involved in past coverage or were identified as having beats of interest to the GNEP project.

From this group, communication consultants and media spokespeople contacted reporters using common talking points. The group shared key information about the effort to assess public values about GNEP in Washington State and assessed media interest in the project. In some cases, these efforts helped detract knee-jerk reactions that many reporters have long practiced with regard to nuclear projects in Washington. These efforts were able to help some reporters hold their editorial comments for a time when more information could be shared on the values and opinions of Washington citizens today. As a result, coverage in some cases was more balanced than in past years.

Other aspects of the media strategy included the following:

- Two news releases were issued by TRIDEC regarding the siting study grant. These news releases were issued on November 29, 2006, and January 30, 2007 (see Appendix).
- Consortium members and consultants created a database of more than 50 regional newspaper, radio, and TV journalists who cover science, technology, the environment, and business beats. These media representatives were contacted by telephone or emailed to discuss the GNEP program and potential siting of facilities at Hanford. Talking points were developed for use with this effort. See the list of talking points in the Appendix.
- Instances of media coverage (print, broadcast, and web) have been tracked and compiled. More than 14 instances of media coverage have been recorded. These are listed in the Appendix.
- A full-color print ad was developed, corresponding with the theme *Shaping our Future: A Conversation with Washington*. The ad is available for use in newspapers and magazines. The ad ran twice in the Tri-City Herald. (See the ad in the Appendix.)

## 5.3 Summary

Stakeholder and community engagement activities conducted during the grant period resulted in the collection of valuable opinions on issues relevant to the TRIDEC siting study, the proposed GNEP Initiative, and nuclear power in the state of Washington and worldwide. In virtually all cases, stakeholders desired more information and details regarding the GNEP Initiative and how it would affect the state. The top priority of Washington stakeholders is the cleanup of nuclear waste at Hanford. Any new nuclear initiative must be evaluated in light of this priority and have no negative impact on Hanford cleanup. However, stakeholders communicated that growing concern about global warming and a reliable energy supply appears to be casting a new light on nuclear power. The prospect of recycling spent fuel and burning nuclear waste to generate climate-friendly power while reducing the volume of spent fuel and defense waste is intriguing to stakeholders who are willing to learn more about GNEP technologies.